

Last week we saw widespread support for our men and women in uniform as the full House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act, which had been approved by the House Armed Services Committee the previous week. I was pleased to see a bipartisan show of commitment, both in committee and in the full House, to our all-volunteer force and to ensuring that our national defense infrastructure remains capable of protecting our freedoms. Our nation faces economic woes at home as well as continually rising threats abroad, and it is absolutely critical in these challenging times that our nation's elected leaders find balanced, responsible ways to provide for and maintain a ready force. As chairman of the Armed Services Committee's Readiness Subcommittee, I remain committed to the honorable men and women who serve this nation, and to their families. I will continue to pursue policies that ensure these men and women are taken care of, both in their training and the equipment they need to do their jobs, and when they return home.

I was also proud to support important legislation last week that would lead to significant job growth in Virginia and increased energy independence for the United States. H.R. 2231, the Offshore Energy and Jobs Act, was advanced out of the House Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday with my support. I have long-argued that our nation must implement an all-of-the-above energy approach that would harness all available forms of energy, including the oil and natural gas resources off our nation's coasts. Continually relying on sources of energy in unstable parts of the world presents a serious threat to our national security, and I believe we must find ways to minimize that reliance.

H.R. 2231 would lift prohibitions on the exploration of these resources off the coast of Virginia, as well as other coastal areas in the United States. This issue is one that is important for job growth and economic security, and I believe that we can significantly reduce our nation's dependence on foreign sources of energy without harming marine resources. This bill now moves to the full House of Representatives for consideration. Responsible efforts such as this one, as well as those that advance various forms of renewable and sustainable forms of energy that I have championed, must be included in our nation's energy strategy moving forward.

The main streets of Virginia's First District are full of ideas to get our economy back on track, and your feedback is so important to me as I serve you. I can be reached by telephone at (202) 225-4261, through my website (www.wittman.house.gov), on Facebook (www.facebook.com/reprobwittman), and via Twitter (www.twitter.com/robwittman).

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee.

